
Government of the District of Columbia



**Office of the Deputy Mayor for
Public Safety and Justice**

Testimony of
Edward D. Reiskin
Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice

***Public Oversight Hearing on "Innovations in Youth
Development Policy, Practice and Programming"***

Special Committee on the Prevention of Youth Violent Crime
The Honorable Vincent C. Gray, Chair
Council of the District of Columbia

December 7, 2005

Room 500
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
1:00 P.M.

Good afternoon Chairperson Gray and members of the Special Committee on the Prevention of Youth Violent Crime. I am Edward Reiskin, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice. I appreciate this opportunity today to update the committee on the Administration's Effective Youth Development Strategy and to hear from the other witnesses from Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and the National League of Cities who will be testifying on "Innovations in Youth Development Policy, Practice and Programming." As I stated in my testimony to the committee in July, public safety officials play a key role in this strategy and its success depends on collaboration between these officials, officials from the District's social services agencies, and, most importantly, our partners in the community.

My testimony this afternoon will follow Deputy Mayor Donald Walker's overview of the implementation plan by highlighting two immediate violence intervention efforts in the plan that rely significantly on the energies of public safety officials. In addition, although MPD assumed management of the school security contract in July, given the committee's interest I will also speak briefly to new developments that will extend the reach of School Resource Officers into the non-DCPS schools that need them.

Before I address our strategy this morning I would like to first enter into the record the most recent indicators at our disposal on juvenile homicide and youth violence. As of today, there have been 11 juvenile homicides in 2005, down from 24 over the same period in 2004 – a 54% decrease in the number of young people murdered in the District. As we had hoped, it is becoming clear that the 24 juvenile homicides that occurred in 2004 were not a sign of a broader trend, especially when viewed against the numbers from 2003 and 2002 when there were 12 and 13 juvenile homicides respectively. Most certainly, however, this is neither a cause for celebration nor an occasion to shift focus. We continue to work towards our goal of zero juvenile homicides.

More importantly, we continue to examine the nature and extent of the problem of juvenile violence from every angle. The number of young people dying from guns has similarly dropped 56% from 2004 to 2005, yet the number of children who died at the hands of a family member or caregiver has mostly remained constant – five deaths (21%) in 2004 and three (27%) so far in 2005. In terms of the age of victims, the most significant change from 2004 to 2005 is that six children between the ages of 13 and 15 were killed in 2004, while there have been none killed in this age group in 2005. The largest number of juvenile homicide victims in 2004 and 2005 continue to be of 16 or 17 years of age (see table below); there were 12 (50%) in this age group killed in 2004 and seven (64%) so far in 2005.

Year	Under 10	13-15	16-17
2004	6	6	12
2005	4	0	7

We are also examining the gender of young murder victims and the location of juvenile homicides. In all of 2004, nine (38%) of the juvenile homicide victims were female. So

far in 2005, only two of the 11 (18%) victims were female. In terms of location, the number of juvenile homicides has fallen in every police district so far in 2005, except for in 3D. The Seventh District again registers more juvenile homicides than the other districts in 2005 (see table below), with nine in 2004 and five so far in 2005.

District	2004	2005 YTD
1D	2	1
2D	0	0
3D	1	2
4D	3	0
5D	5	0
6D	4	3
7D	9	5

And, of course, juvenile homicide data is not the only public safety yard stick we are using to measure youth violence and the success of our youth violence reduction efforts. MPD's prevention strategy emphasizes the enforcement of "gateway" crimes, such as juvenile car theft, curfew violations, and truancy, as a means of intervening early to prevent more serious juvenile crime. Data on these offenses may indeed be better indicators of the state of youth violence in DC. While arrests are down slightly in 2005, the numbers are still quite high and seem to be on the rise in recent months. We have had more than 2,500 arrests, and similar numbers of truancy and curfew violations (see table below). And this fiscal year we have added another yard stick. As of October, we are baselining data on the number of Part I crimes committed on school property per 1,000 students as a performance measure for MPD's Office of Security Services, which now manages the school security contract for DC Public Schools.

Category	2004¹	2005
Arrests ²	2,728	2,632
Arrests for Unauthorized Use of Vehicle ³	506	459
Custody Orders	570	457
Truancy Violations	3,072	2,618
Curfew Violations	1,227	2,976

At this time let me also say a word about citywide crime levels in light of recent events. The Administration supports Chief Ramsey's action this weekend to temporarily suspend the Department's collective bargaining agreement with the FOP to allow for greater scheduling flexibility to combat the recent spike in certain serious crimes. With this

¹ All 2004 data except arrests cover the full calendar year

² All arrest data and all 2005 data cover the period from January 1 to November 26

³ Though the number of juvenile arrests for UUV has decreased 9 percent in 2005, the number of stolen autos has decreased 16 percent over the same time period, indicating MPD's vigorous enforcement of this juvenile gateway crime.

action, MPD will raise the level of intensity of its focused mission teams, robbery squads, and other units to address the latest homicide and robbery numbers. I do want to note here that the most recent juvenile homicide was on November 5th, so juvenile homicides represent just one of the “24 homicides in the past 32 days” that have been referenced in the public about the current crime emergency. Although nearly all categories of serious crime are still down in 2005 and overall crime is down by 7%, robberies are up citywide by 6% and recent reports and arrests suggest that juveniles are playing a role in this spike.

These numbers, the personal stories behind the numbers, and our own experiences tell us that for all we are doing that may have helped save the lives of children in 2005, the sum of our collective actions is not enough. With that recognition and inspired by a series of meetings I attended with some of the community members present here today, Deputy Mayor Donald Walker and I convened an interagency work group in October under these two premises: 1) that there is a relatively small number of kids that need a relatively high level of attention and 2) that the government alone is incapable of reaching and staying with all of them. Representatives from both of our clusters along with the schools and some of our federal partners sat together in one room with the objective of identifying a means of positively engaging a cohort of these hardest-to-reach kids who are caught up in a lifestyle of violence. While the implementation plan is still being developed, the idea is to reach these kids through people who are in the community and to apply one-on-one intensive support to not only place each kid on the right path, but to stay with him or her over time to ensure that he or she remains on that path to a safe and productive future. This initiative is one of the immediate violence intervention efforts to go live within the next few months as part of the strategy’s Safety First! action steps.

A separate Safety First! effort is underway to establish a Violence Intervention Partnership (VIP) in Wards 7 and 8 modeled after the highly successful Columbia Heights/Shaw Weed & Seed Gang Intervention Partnership (GIP). Like the GIP, the VIP will involve a collaborative effort to reduce violence among at-risk youth and young adults ages 15 to 25 years old through innovative law enforcement, conflict resolution, grass roots mediation and prevention strategies.

The VIP will also focus on strengthening relationships between law enforcement, social outreach workers, treatment providers and the community, to ensure a holistic family- and child-centered approach in its mission. Chaired by Assistant Chief Willie Dandridge, core partners and members of the VIP met on Monday at the Regional Operations Command (ROC) East Headquarters to discuss the scope, goals, and mission of the VIP, the roles of the respective stakeholders, and the parameters of an action plan. The MPD contingent will include nine officers and a sergeant operating jointly out of ROC-East. The next step is for the collaborators to define their specific contributions to the effort in conjunction with their respective organizations, and then for the group to get back together to identify target areas and draft an implementation plan, which will include the designation of neighborhood VIP hot spots for intensive intervention and outreach.

And lastly, I wanted to offer the committee and the public an update on new developments regarding school security. Beginning with the transfer of management responsibility for school security from DC Public Schools (DCPS) to the MPD on July 1, 99 School Resource Officers and 14 supervisors have now successfully provided a uniform police presence at junior and senior public high schools throughout the District for nearly six months in addition to the contract guards they supervise. Last month, Assistant Chief Gerald Wilson and I met with representatives from the DC Public Charter School Association (DCPCSA) to discuss the school safety needs at non-DCPS schools. MPD is currently completing an analysis of these schools using the same criteria that were applied to DCPS schools to determine where the greatest need lies. Preliminary results indicate that SROs will be needed at some of these schools and that MPD will subsequently have to adjust police staffing across the board in order to resource the non-DCPS schools for the spring semester. Throughout the spring we will work on a more sustainable solution for the subsequent school years. In the mean time, MPD is working closely with any school with an identified security problem.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and to hear the testimony from the other witnesses on innovations in youth development. I am available for any questions that you may have.